THE SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING
26
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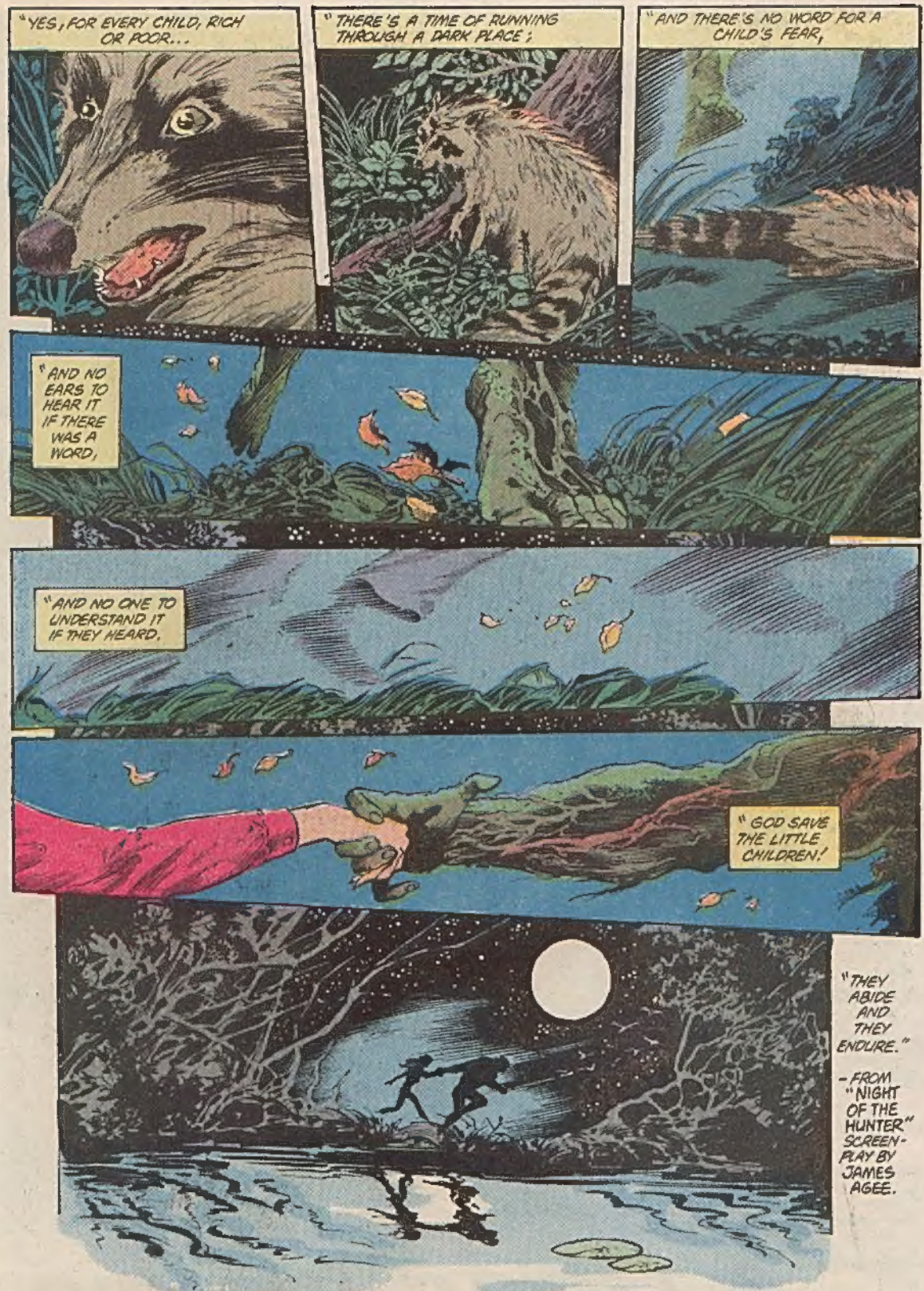
THE NEW
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.
S.R. BISSETTE
& TOTLEBEN
2-20-84


"YES, FOR EVERY CHILD, RICH OR POOR...
"THERE'S A TIME OF RUNNING THROUGH A DARK PLACE;
"AND THERE'S NO WORD FOR A CHILD'S FEAR,
"AND NO EARS TO HEAR IT IF THERE WAS A WORD,
"AND NO ONE TO UNDERSTAND IT IF THEY HEARD.
"GOD SAVE THE LITTLE CHILDREN!
"THEY ABIDE AND THEY ENDURE."
-FROM "NIGHT OF THE HUNTER" SCREEN-PLAY BY JAMES AGEE.

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swamp thing

CREATED BY LEN WEIN AND BERNI WRIGHTSON

IT BEGAN WITH A DEATH...

HARRY PRICE LOFT INSURANCE

IT BEGAN WITH BLOOD.

ARE YOU ENJOYING THE TEA, MRS. CABLE?

FISH ARE FOR DISPLAY ONLY NOT FOR SALE

NO. I'M SHOOK UP FROM THAT ACCIDENT AND IT TASTES LIKE *IRON FILINGS.*

ALSO, WHENEVER I MEET SOMEBODY LIKE YOU IT USUALLY ENDS IN *BAD CRAZINESS.*

"*BAD CRAZINESS*" WOULD SEEM TO BE A PHENOMENON THAT YOU ARE *FAMILIAR* WITH. BUT THEN, YOU ARE AN *ARCANE.*

FOR YOU, IT COMES WITH THE *BLOOD.*

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An
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*
Presentation

... a time of running...

ARCANE'S MY MAIDEN NAME. HOW...?
IT ISN'T IMPORTANT.
THE BAD CRAZINESS IS ALMOST UPON YOU, MRS. CABLE. ONLY ELYSIUM LAWNS IS IMPORTANT NOW.

YOU START WORK THERE TOMORROW. THERE IS A CHILD, AN ORPHAN WHOSE PARENTS DIED RECENTLY OF CAUSES UNKNOWN.
HIS NAME IS PAUL. YOU MUST MAKE SURE THAT...

ISN'T THERE EVEN A CORNER OF MY LIFE THAT'S SAFE FROM ALL THIS WEIRDNESS?
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE OR HOW YOU KNOW ABOUT ME, BUT YOU JUST KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF ELYSIUM LAWNS!

YOUR SELF-PITY INTERESTS ME NOT EVEN SLIGHTLY.
IT IS THE CHILDREN WHO ARE IN DANGER. WATCH OVER THEM, WOMAN, TRY TO SAVE AS MANY AS YOU CAN.
FOR YOU KNOW LESS THAN THEY OF MADNESS...

IT BEGAN WITH BLOOD..

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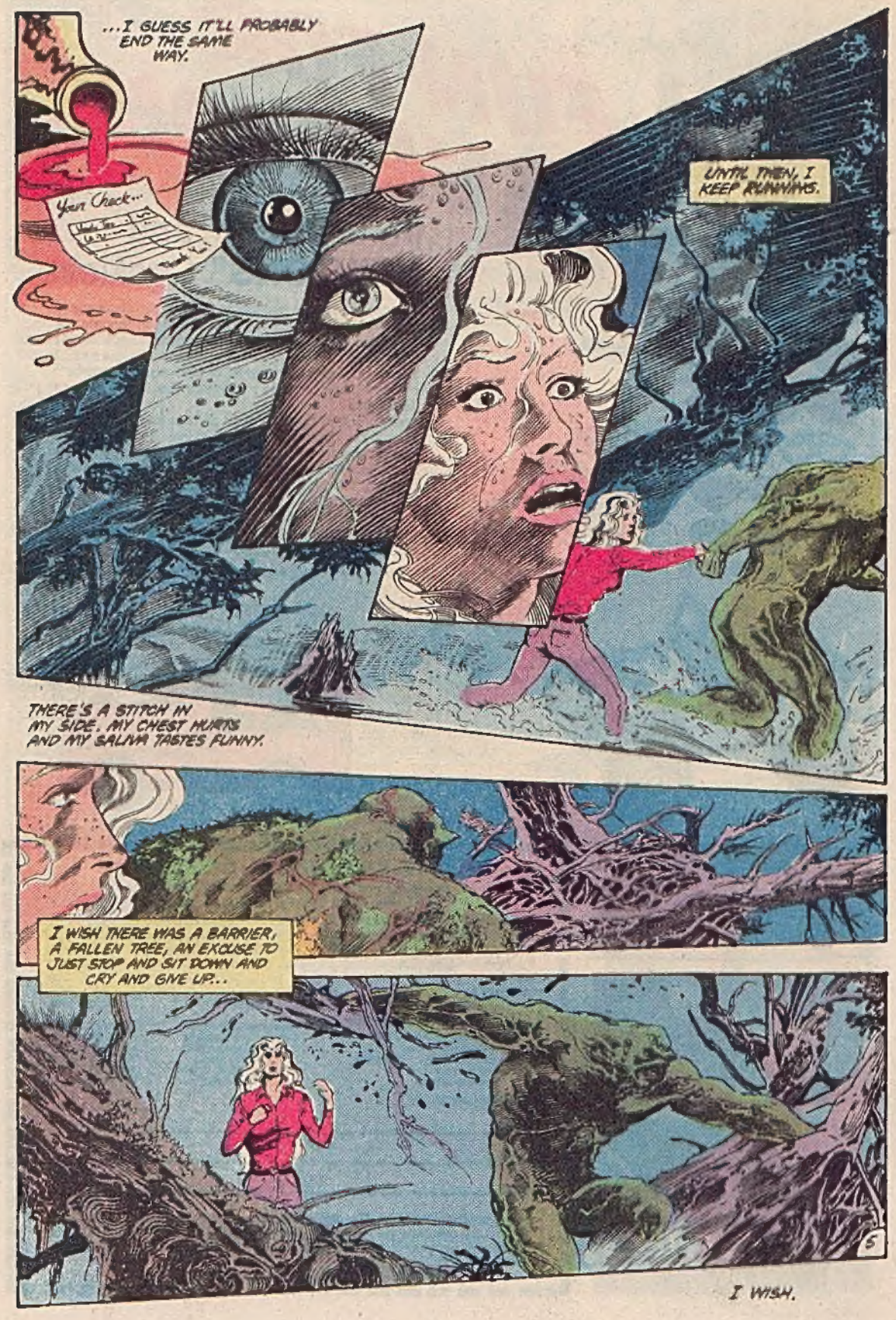
...I GUESS IT'LL PROBABLY END THE SAME WAY.
Your Check...
UNTIL THEN, I KEEP RUNNING.
THERE'S A STITCH IN MY SIDE. MY CHEST HURTS AND MY SALIVA TASTES FUNNY.
I WISH THERE WAS A BARRIER, A FALLEN TREE, AN EXCUSE TO JUST STOP AND SIT DOWN AND CRY AND GIVE UP...
I WISH.
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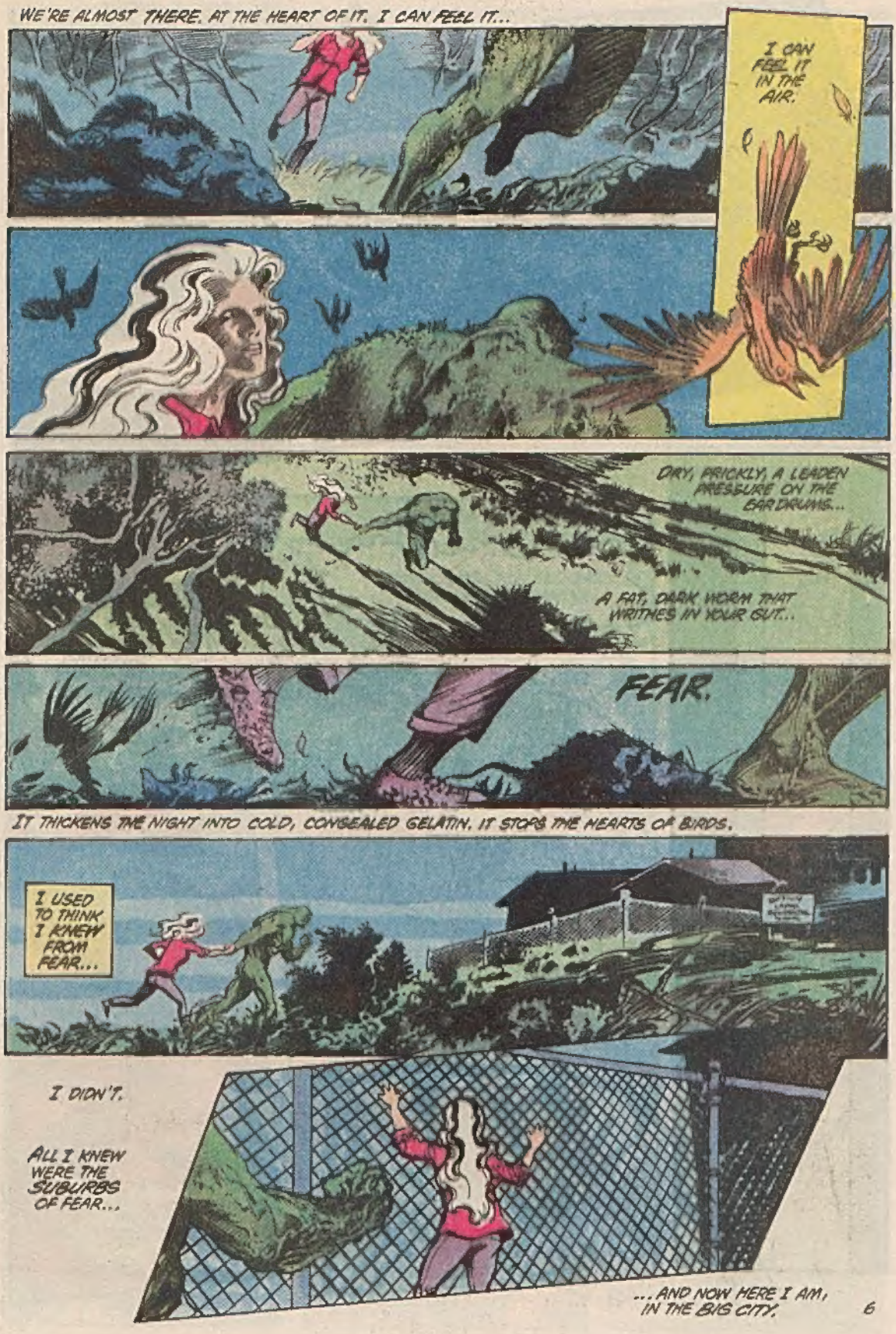
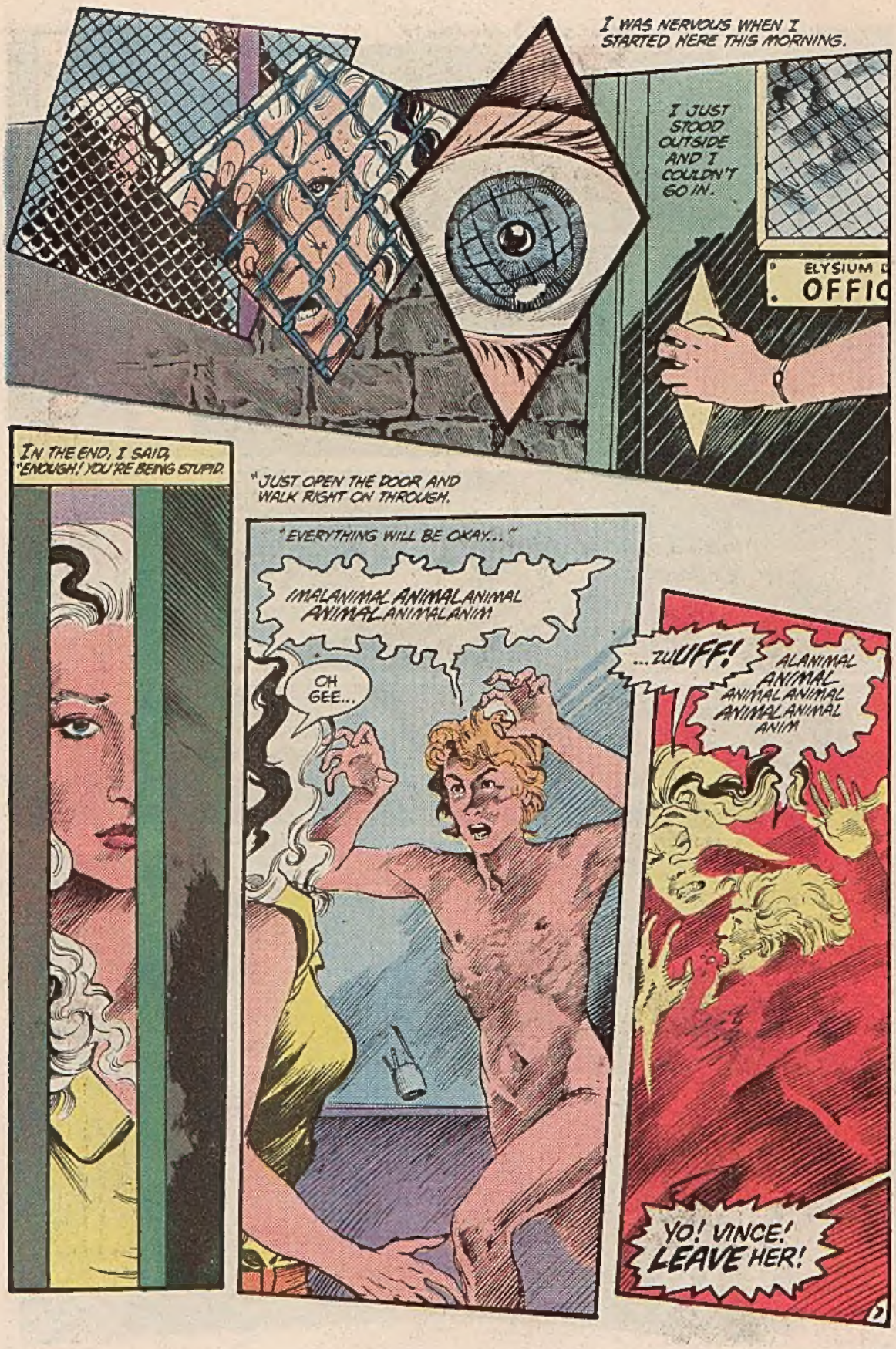
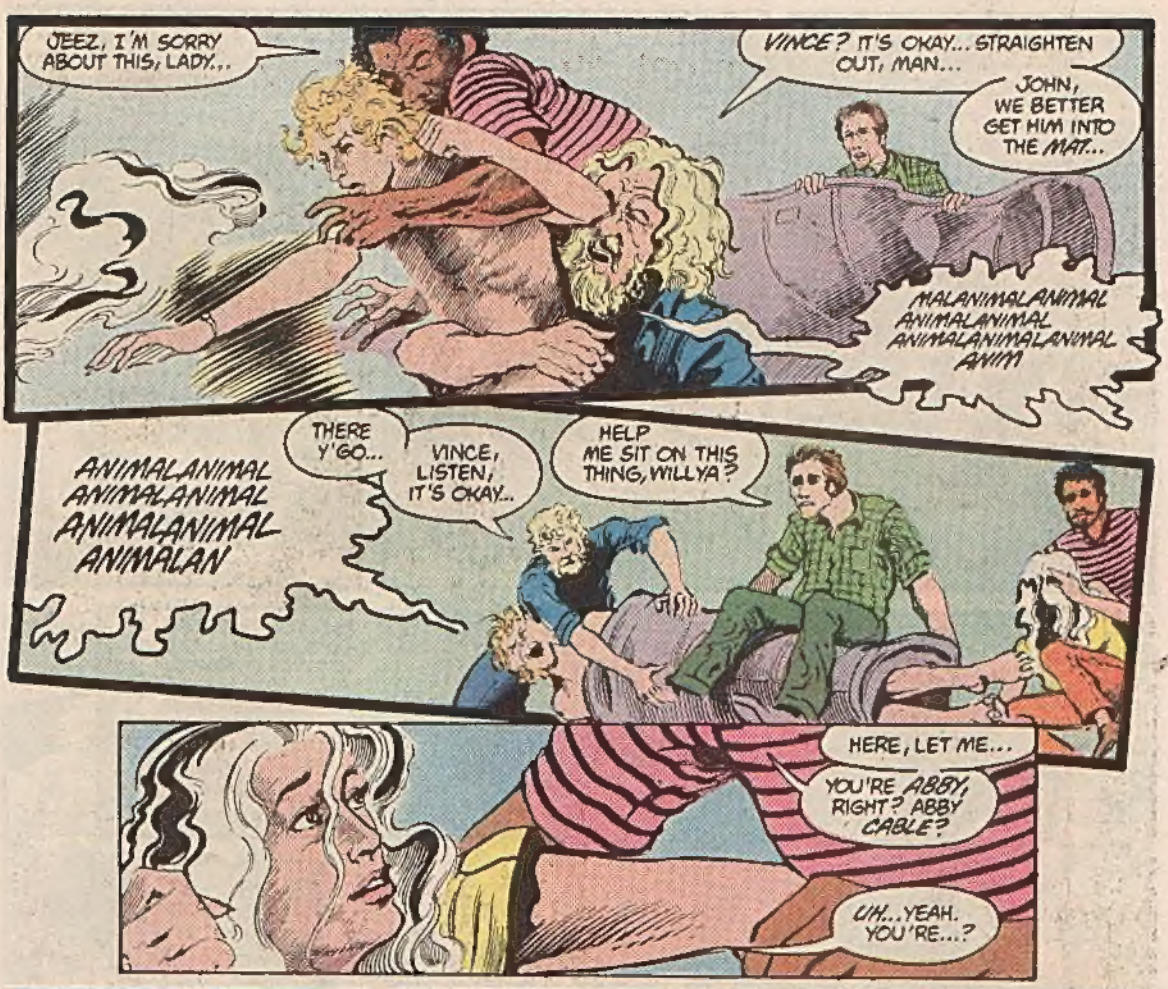

WE'RE ALMOST THERE. AT THE HEART OF IT. I CAN FEEL IT...
I CAN FEEL IT IN THE AIR.
DRY, PRICKLY, A LEADEN PRESSURE ON THE EAR DRUMS...
A FAT, DARK WORM THAT WRITHES IN YOUR GUT...
FEAR.
IT THICKENS THE NIGHT INTO COLD, CONGEALED GELATIN. IT STOPS THE HEARTS OF BIRDS.
I USED TO THINK I KNEW FROM FEAR...
I DIDN'T.
ALL I KNEW WERE THE SUBURBS OF FEAR...
...AND NOW HERE I AM, IN THE BIG CITY.

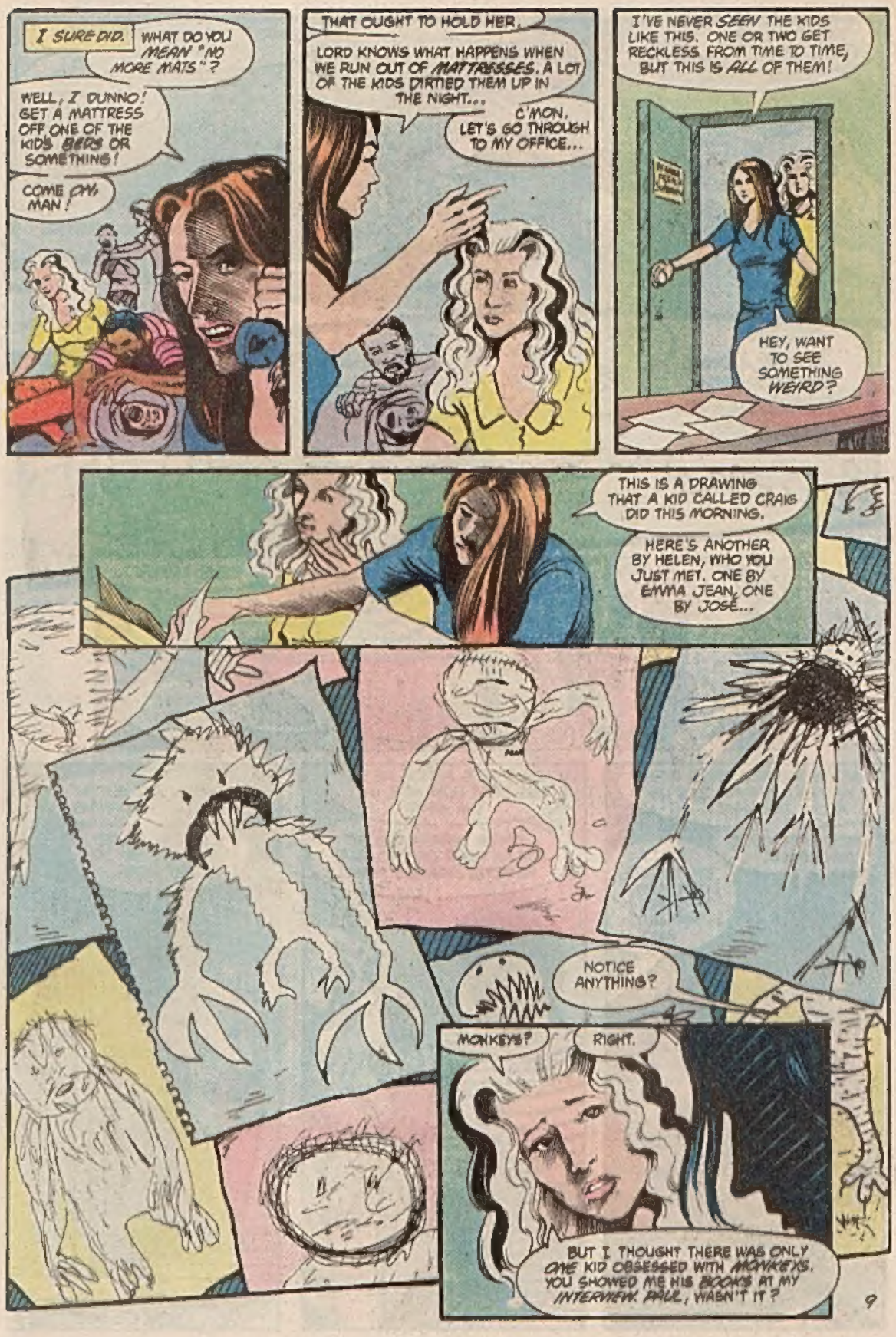

I WAS NERVOUS WHEN I STARTED HERE THIS MORNING.
I JUST STOOD OUTSIDE AND I COULDN'T GO IN.
ELYSIUM
OFFIC
IN THE END, I SAID, "ENOUGH! YOU'RE BEING STUPID.
"JUST OPEN THE DOOR AND WALK RIGHT ON THROUGH.
"EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY..."
IMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMALANIM
OH GEE...
...zuUFF!
ALANIMAL ANIMAL ANIMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMAL ANIM
YO! VINCE! LEAVE HER!


JEEZ, I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS, LADY...
VINCE? IT'S OKAY... STRAIGHTEN OUT, MAN...
JOHN, WE BETTER GET HIM INTO THE MAT...
MALANIMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMALANIMAL ANIM
ANIMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMAL ANIMALAN
THERE Y'GO...
VINCE, LISTEN, IT'S OKAY..
HELP ME SIT ON THIS THING, WILLYA?
HERE, LET ME...
YOU'RE ABBY, RIGHT? ABBY CABLE?
UH...YEAH. YOU'RE...?

TIM. TIM CARBURTON. I KNEW IT WAS YOU. DEANNA TOLD US ABOUT THE HAIR...
NICE HAIR Y'GOT, MS. CABLE.
WELL, UH, THANKS, TIM. SAY, WHO WAS THAT GUY WHO...

OH, THAT'S VINCE. HE'LL BE OKAY NOW HE'S IN THE MAT.
MAYBE THRASH AROUND FOR AN HOUR OR TWO, BUT HE WON'T DAMAGE HIMSELF.

THEY'RE ALL CUTTIN' LOOSE THIS MORNING.
YOU SURE PICKED A TERRIFIC DAY TO START WORK.
EXIT
KNOCK KNOCK


I SURE DID.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "NO MORE MATS"?
WELL, I DUNNO! GET A MATTRESS OFF ONE OF THE KID'S BEDS OR SOMETHING!
COME ON, MAN!
THAT OUGHT TO HOLD HER.
LORD KNOWS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE RUN OUT OF MATTRESSES. A LOT OF THE KIDS DIRTIED THEM UP IN THE NIGHT...
C'MON, LET'S GO THROUGH TO MY OFFICE...
I'VE NEVER SEEN THE KIDS LIKE THIS. ONE OR TWO GET RECKLESS FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT THIS IS ALL OF THEM!
HEY, WANT TO SEE SOMETHING WEIRD?
THIS IS A DRAWING THAT A KID CALLED CRAIG DID THIS MORNING.
HERE'S ANOTHER BY HELEN, WHO YOU JUST MET. ONE BY EMMA JEAN, ONE BY JOSÉ...
NOTICE ANYTHING?
MONKEYS?
RIGHT.
BUT I THOUGHT THERE WAS ONLY ONE KID OBSESSED WITH MONKEYS. YOU SHOWED ME HIS BOOKS AT MY INTERVIEW. PAUL, WASN'T IT?

IT WAS.
PAUL?
HOW'S IT GOING? YOU REMEMBER ME? ABIGAIL?
A-B-I-G-A-I-L.
HELLO, ABIGAIL.
YOU KNOW, YOU'LL DIE PRETTY SOON.
HUH?
IT'LL JUST SCARE YOU TO DEATH, D-E-A-T-H. WHATEVER YOU'RE SCARED OF, THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
PLEASE REPLACE TOYS AFTER PLAY
SPIDERS, I BET. MOST GIRLS ARE SCARED OF SPIDERS.
S-P-I-D-E-R-S.
ROBERTA SAID IT LOOKED LIKE HER KID BROTHER, ONLY HE WAS ALL BLUE. R-O-B-E-R-T-A.
PAUL? PAUL, WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?
YOU KNOW.
THE MONKEY KING.
PAUL'S TALKING ABOUT THE MONKEY KING...
...BUT NOBODY BELIEVES HIM.
10
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

I BELIEVE YOU, PAUL...
15
...NOW WHO'S GOING TO BELIEVE ME?
11

ABBY, I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!
MOTOR INN
Mesler's Milky Way
YOU JUST GOT HOME FROM THAT MADHOUSE!
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO GO BACK?
MATT! IT IS NOT A MADHOUSE! THEY'RE KIDS!
DON'T YOU DARE CALL IT A MADHOUSE!
ONE OF 'EM BIT YOU ON THE LEG, ABBY!
ONE OF 'EM SWORE AT YOU AND ALMOST RIPPED YOUR HAIR OUT.
THEY THROW UP THEIR FOOD, THEY DON'T KEEP THEMSELVES CLEAN...
THEY'RE KIDS!
THEY NEED SOMEBODY...
...AND THEY NEED SOMEBODY TONIGHT!
AND WHAT IF I NEED SOMEBODY TONIGHT?
OR IS FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE ABOVE THAT KIND OF STUFF?
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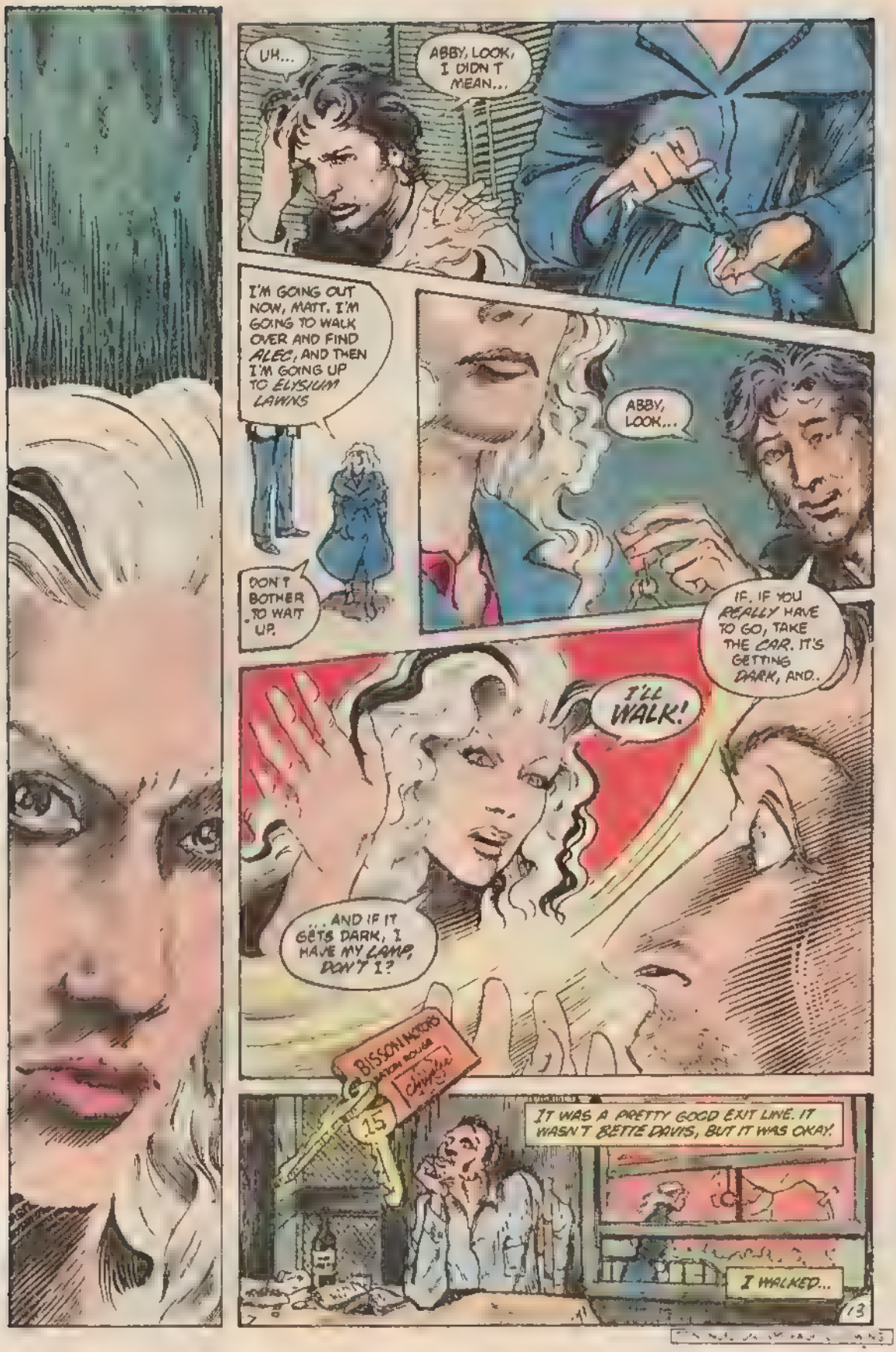
UH...
ABBY, LOOK, I DIDN'T MEAN...
I'M GOING OUT NOW, MATT. I'M GOING TO WALK OVER AND FIND ALEC, AND THEN I'M GOING UP TO ELYSIUM LAWNS
ABBY, LOOK...
DON'T BOTHER TO WAIT UP.
IF, IF YOU REALLY HAVE TO GO, TAKE THE CAR. IT'S GETTING DARK, AND..
I'LL WALK!
...AND IF IT GETS DARK, I HAVE MY LAMP, DON'T I?
BISSON MOTORS
15
IT WAS A PRETTY GOOD EXIT LINE. IT WASN'T BETTE DAVIS, BUT IT WAS OKAY.
I WALKED...
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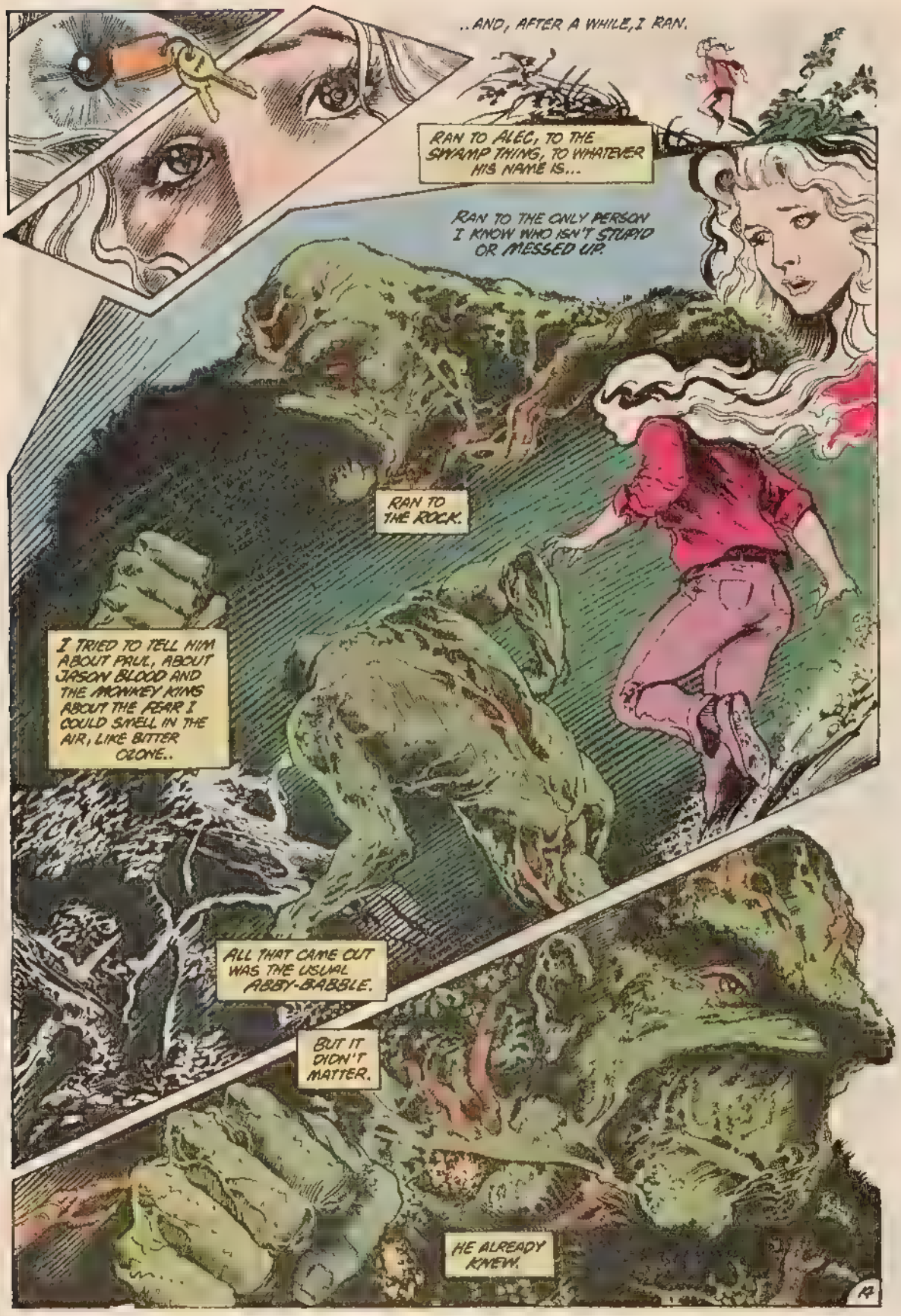
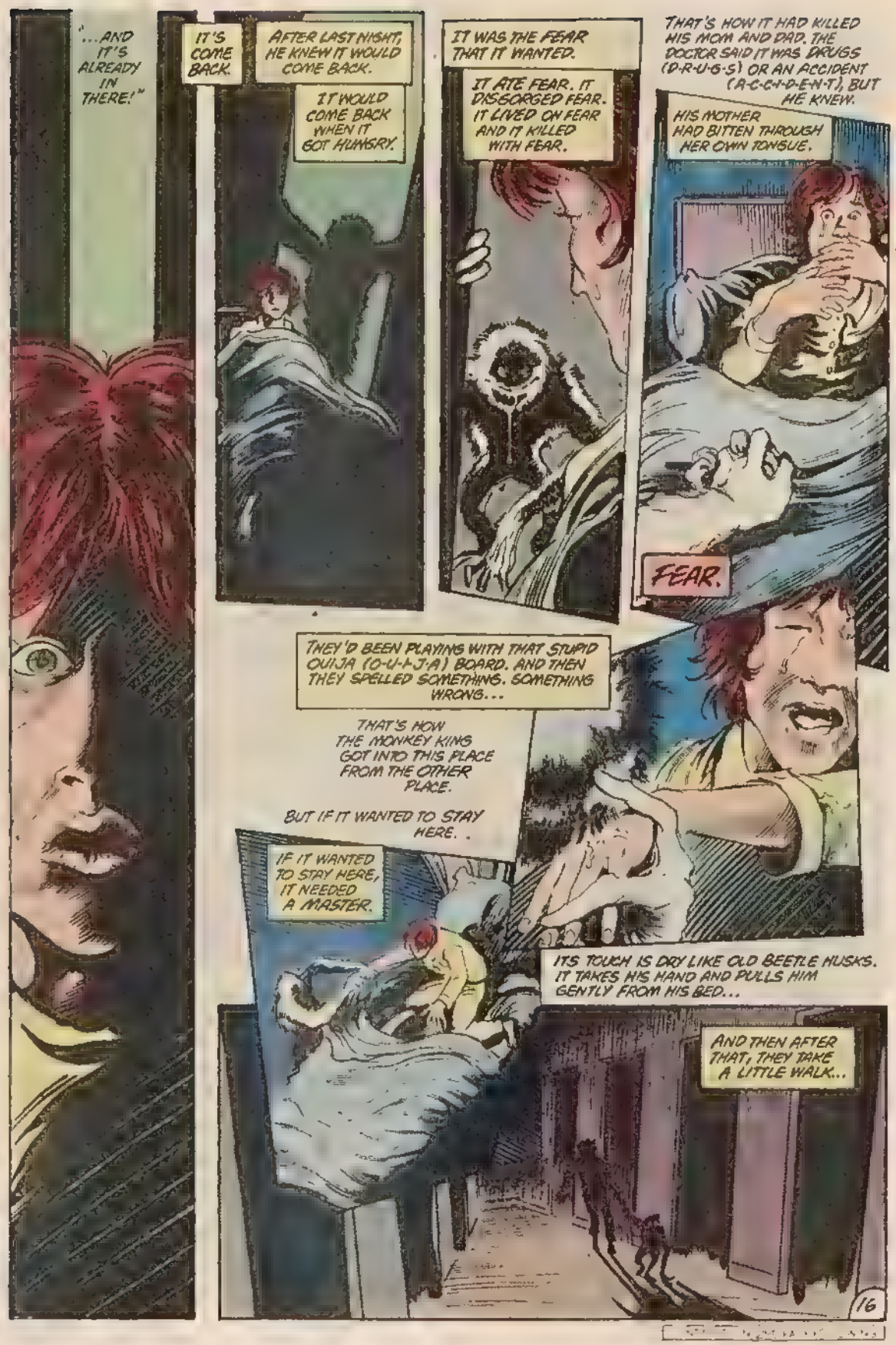

..AND, AFTER A WHILE, I RAN.
RAN TO ALEC, TO THE SWAMP THING, TO WHATEVER HIS NAME IS...
RAN TO THE ONLY PERSON I KNOW WHO ISN'T STUPID OR MESSED UP.
RAN TO THE ROCK.
I TRIED TO TELL HIM ABOUT PAUL, ABOUT JASON BLOOD AND THE MONKEY KING ABOUT THE FEAR I COULD SMELL IN THE AIR, LIKE BITTER OZONE..
ALL THAT CAME OUT WAS THE USUAL ABBY-BABBLE.
BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER.
HE ALREADY KNEW.

I THINK HE KNEW MORE THAN ME, ABOUT HOW BAD THINGS WERE.
HE MADE US RUN ALL THE WAY HERE...
THAT MUST MEAN IT'S NOT TOO LATE, MUST'N'T IT?
HE WOULDN'T HAVE MADE US RUN IF IT HAD ALREADY BEEN TOO LA'E...
...WOULD HE?
HE'D FELT IT, TOO..
FELT IT IN THE SOIL, IN THE WIND.
HE'D SEEN IT IN THE FLIGHT OF THE BIRDS AND IN THE EYES OF THE 'GATORS...
WE'RE TOO LATE.
HE CAN FEEL IT.
OH GOD, I CAN FEEL IT TOO. WE RAN ALL THAT WAY...
HE KNEW.
15


"...AND IT'S ALREADY IN THERE!"
IT'S COME BACK.
AFTER LAST NIGHT, HE KNEW IT WOULD COME BACK.
IT WOULD COME BACK WHEN IT GOT HUNGRY.
IT WAS THE FEAR THAT IT WANTED.
IT ATE FEAR. IT DISGORGED FEAR. IT LIVED ON FEAR AND IT KILLED WITH FEAR.
THAT'S HOW IT HAD KILLED HIS MOM AND DAD. THE DOCTOR SAID IT WAS DRUGS (D-R-U-G-S) OR AN ACCIDENT (A-C-C-I-D-E-N-T), BUT HE KNEW.
HIS MOTHER HAD BITTEN THROUGH HER OWN TONGUE.
FEAR.
THEY'D BEEN PLAYING WITH THAT STUPID OUIJA (O-U-I-J-A) BOARD. AND THEN THEY SPELLED SOMETHING. SOMETHING WRONG...
THAT'S HOW THE MONKEY KING GOT INTO THIS PLACE FROM THE OTHER PLACE.
BUT IF IT WANTED TO STAY HERE. .
IF IT WANTED TO STAY HERE, IT NEEDED A MASTER.
ITS TOUCH IS DRY LIKE OLD BEETLE HUSKS. IT TAKES HIS HAND AND PULLS HIM GENTLY FROM HIS BED...
AND THEN AFTER THAT, THEY TAKE A LITTLE WALK...
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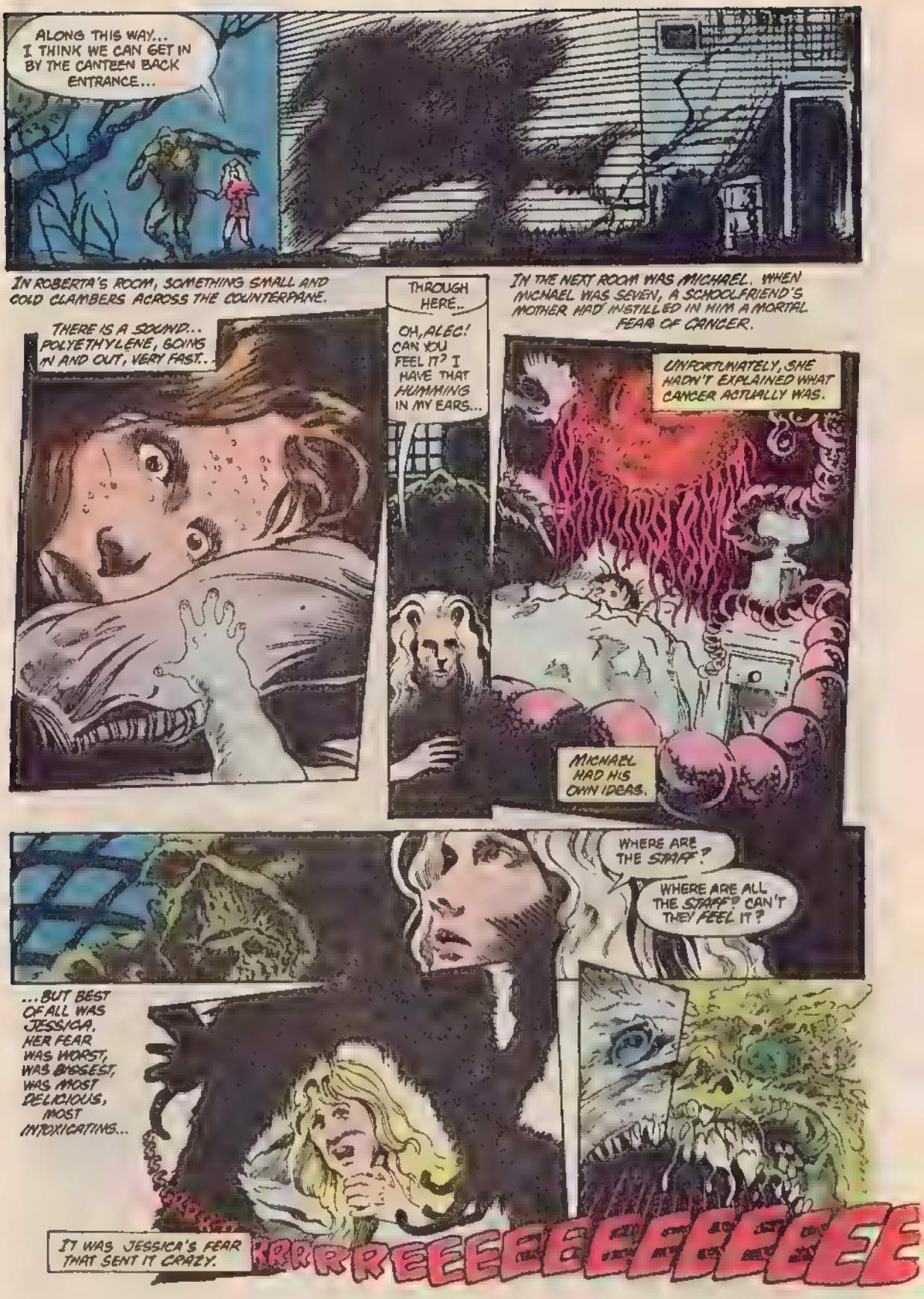
ALONG THIS WAY... I THINK WE CAN GET IN BY THE CANTEEN BACK ENTRANCE...
IN ROBERTA'S ROOM, SOMETHING SMALL AND COLD CLAMBERS ACROSS THE COUNTERPANE.
THERE IS A SOUND... POLYETHYLENE, GOING IN AND OUT, VERY FAST...
THROUGH HERE...
OH, ALEC! CAN YOU FEEL IT? I HAVE THAT HUMMING IN MY EARS...
IN THE NEXT ROOM WAS MICHAEL. WHEN MICHAEL WAS SEVEN, A SCHOOLFRIEND'S MOTHER HAD INSTILLED IN HIM A MORTAL FEAR OF CANCER.
UNFORTUNATELY, SHE HADN'T EXPLAINED WHAT CANCER ACTUALLY WAS.
MICHAEL HAD HIS OWN IDEAS.
WHERE ARE THE STAFF?
WHERE ARE ALL THE STAFF? CAN'T THEY FEEL IT?
...BUT BEST OF ALL WAS JESSICA. HER FEAR WAS WORST, WAS BIGGEST, WAS MOST DELICIOUS, MOST INTOXICATING...
IT WAS JESSICA'S FEAR THAT SENT IT CRAZY.
RRRREEEEEEEEEEEE

MO-O-OM--Y NEEDUNT KNO-O-OWW...
"WHATEVER YOU'RE SCARED OF, THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE...
KKRAAGHAKK!
MO-MEE NEEDUNT KNO-O-OW...
ITS VOICE IS A SLURRED AND MINDLESS PARODY. ITS FEATURES ARE SLACK AND HARDLY FORMED...
"WHATEVER YOU'RE SCARED OF..."
ITS SHAPE FLOWS, A VISCOUS NIGHTMARE OF LIQUID FLESH. ITS VOICE SPEEDS AND SLOWS AND CHANGES. THE CHILDREN SCREAM, THE MONKEY SCREAMS...
THE NOISE IS UNBEARABLE. ALEC IS SHOUTING, TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING. DOESN'T HE REALIZE? WE'RE TOO LATE!
AND THERE ISN'T A HOPE...

"NOT A HOPE IN HELL."
SO...
THE TOYS ABOUT THE NURSERY ARE SET, FOR IDIOT CHAOS TO ARRANGE AT WHIM. HE DROOLS AND RUINS LIVES, HIS CHIN IS WET AND OLD OR YOUNG...
...IT MATTERS NOT TO HIM.

"THE GRACIOUS LADY AND HER ROOT-CHOKED BEAST HAVE COME TO SAVE THE INNOCENTS FROM HARM, TO SPARE THEM FROM THE MONKEY'S DREADFUL FEAST. WHAT NOBLE SOULS THEY HAVE! WHAT FAITH! WHAT CHARM!
"AND SEE! THE CHILDREN'S UPROAR BRINGS TO LIFE THEIR GUARDIANS: THAT MOST DEDICATED BREED! YET SHE BETRAYS HER HUSBAND, HE HIS WIFE, THOUGH BOTH OF THEM ARE KIND TO BABES IN NEED."
SHOULD INNOCENCE BE MOLLYCODDLED THUS? I FAIL TO SEE THE REASON FOR THE FUSS.
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
I AM THE ONE WHO COMES TO CAGE THE APE. I PAY NO HEED TO YOUTH OR PURITY. I'LL ROAST EACH FOOL THAT AIDS THE BEAST'S ESCAPE, AND DRINK THEIR HEALTH TONIGHT IN PURSAT'RY!
INNOCENTS? WHY, TO HEAR THE TALES THEY TELL...
...YOU'D THINK THERE WAS NO GUILTY CHILD IN HELL!
FEAST, JACK-AN-APE! EAT HEARTY WHILE YOU CAN...
20

UPON YOUR NECK'S THE BREATH OF ETRIGAN!
IT BEGAN WITH DEATH.
IT BEGAN WITH BLOOD...
21

"...I GUESS IT'LL PROBABLY END THE SAME WAY."

THE NIGHT...

THE NIGHT CAN MAKE A MAN SEE HIMSELF, CAN MAKE HIM LOOK INTO HIS OWN INSIDES...

...AND THE NIGHT CAN MAKE HIM HONEST ENOUGH TO ACCEPT WHAT HE FINDS THERE.

ALL THE WEAKNESS, ALL THE SELFISHNESS, THE CLAMMY DESIRES AND THE SMALL CRUELTIES.

HE'S BEEN THINKING. THINKING SINCE SHE WALKED OUT THE DOOR...

SHE NEEDED HIS HELP, AND HE WASN'T THERE, THE NIGHT...

WILD KINGDOM OUR INSECT ALLIES

...IT CAN BLOODY UP A MAN'S CONSCIENCE.

HE BUTTONS HIS COAT AND STEPS OUTSIDE.

HE'S GOING AFTER HER, GOING TO HELP HER, GOING OUT INTO THE COLD...

...THE DARK...

...THE NIGHT.

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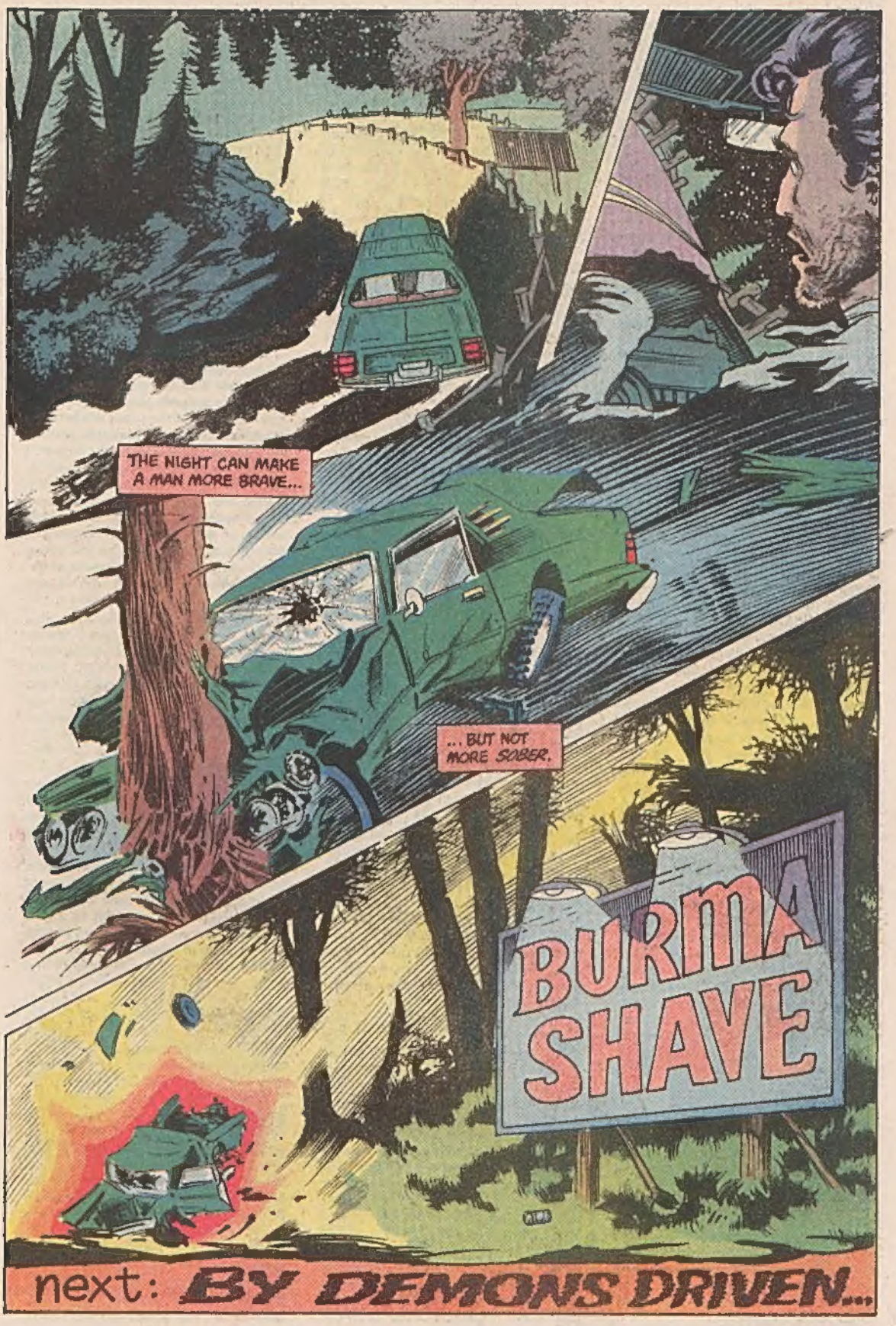
THE NIGHT CAN MAKE A MAN MORE BRAVE...
...BUT NOT MORE SOBER.
BURMA SHAVE
next: BY DEMONS DRIVEN...